

# ROBBERIES AND ABUSIVE CUSTOMERS

## Tips for preventing injuries

### Handling cash

- Leave a clear, unobstructed view of the cash register from the street.
- Post signs saying cash register contains minimal cash.
- Store cash in a drop safe, limited-access safe or comparable safe container.
- Don't count cash or close the till in front of customers.
- Practice the "buddy system" during cash drops.



## Creating a safer restaurant or retail environment

### Training

- Develop a workplace violence prevention plan. Use it to train your employees.
- Train employees on what to do in case of a robbery.
- Train employees on how to de-escalate a potentially violent situation. Establish a policy that employees not resist or pursue shoplifters.
- Establish a reporting process for violent incidents and threats.

### Postings

- Post emergency telephone numbers.
- Post laws against assault, stalking or violent acts.

### Staffing

- Schedule at least two people per shift. Minors may not work without adult (age 18 or older) supervision after 8 p.m.
- Don't require servers to wear revealing or sexy uniforms.
- Keep background noise to a minimum.

## Entering and leaving

- Have more than one exit employees can reach in case of emergency.
- Practice the “buddy system” to walk to public transportation and parking areas.
- Make sure back doors are locked at night. Employees should still be able to exit easily.

## Security and lighting

- Use alarms and locks. Make sure they work properly.
- Use security surveillance cameras or mirrors.
- Provide a “panic” button, silent alarm or other means for employees to communicate with police or security.
- Provide adequate lighting and security in parking lots and other areas where employees go alone at night.
- Work with your local law enforcement to identify any special arrangements which might be useful in a particular location.



## Learn more

The following information is available from the Washington Department of Labor and Industries (L&I).

- *Workplace Violence: Awareness and Prevention for Employers and Employees*: This guidebook describes four types of workplace violence, outlines steps to minimize and prevent violent acts, and discusses potential risk factors and prevention techniques. Includes a sample program and reproducible forms. Available online at [www.LNI.wa.gov/IPUB/417-140-000.pdf](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/IPUB/417-140-000.pdf) or by calling 1-800-423-7233. Request F417-140-000.
- L&I's web site. Find useful information on workplace violence prevention and links to other resources at [www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ/WPV](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ/WPV).
- Restaurant Safety: Robbery Prevention and Awareness (Cómo Prevenir Robos), animated training video from L&I's video library on-line at [www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/TrainTools/Videos/Library](http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/TrainTools/Videos/Library) [Video ID: V0947]; Or call 1-800-574-9881 or email [shvideo@Lni.wa.gov](mailto:shvideo@Lni.wa.gov).
- OSHA's web site. Find additional resources on Violence Prevention at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence)

### **Does the late-night retail workers crime prevention rule apply to my business?**

In Washington State, retail businesses operating between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. must take specific crime prevention steps. The rule, WAC 296-832, does not apply to restaurants, hotels, taverns and lodging facilities, although the recommendations may be useful in these settings.

To learn more about the Late Night Retail Crime Prevention rule, go to [www.LNI.wa.gov/wisha/rules/latenightretailing](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/wisha/rules/latenightretailing) or call the L&I office nearest you and ask to speak to a safety and health consultant.